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Book Notices.

"*The Rudiments of Architecture and Building.*" Edited by John Bullock. pp. 468. STRINGER & TOWNSEND.

THE first part of this book is a compilation from several English publications, none of them of any particular merit, with the addition of a brief and somewhat superficial glossary by the editor. The second part is from Dobson's work on building, and may be commended for the carefulness of its arrangement and accuracy of its information. We could pass over the first part without special criticism, and even with approval of its general teaching, but that it embodies, in an abridged form, Mr. Garbett's work on the principles of design in architecture. This, with much that is true and valuable, contains also many ideas against which we must warn the student into whose hands the volume comes. We note a few examples.

Mr. Garbett works out a theory of the subordination of forms, too elaborate to be quoted here, which we think fanciful in itself, and know to be entirely unsupported by the practice of the best Gothic architects. His theory carries him too far. In illustrating it, he says, among other things, "The flowing tracery of the fourteenth century," is preferable "to the geometrical of the thirteenth." We do not believe it—and for proof to the contrary refer to the discussion of the subject in the "Seven Lamps" of Mr. Ruskin.

The author attempts to show that our modern Gothic is constructively false, because the style was originally developed by the practice of groining, which is now generally superseded by open timber roofs. His argument is shallow, because an open timber roof, if framed with principals, exerts its thrust upon the walls in just the same manner as a groined ceiling, and, therefore, requires the same abutment of buttresses, pinnacles, etc. It cannot be denied that the one system of roofing is quite as much in the Gothic spirit as the other.

Again, "construction is a more important thing than ornament, and has more relation to the higher excellences of the Art!" A fearful mistake! What could the writer have been thinking of? He here certainly runs against the excellent definition of architecture, with which the essay commences. It is strange that even architects cannot understand that architecture, is a *Fine Art*—not a mechanic Art or a science.

The extravagant laudation of the Grecian styles as being the greatest ever produced, and destined to be always, more or less, used, is, to our minds, quite disgusting. We cannot comprehend why any man should now wish to copy the Parthenon. The style is totally unfit for our purposes, involves needless expense, and is, as we use it, without sculpture, utterly lifeless. We do not believe that the inventor of the Doric order possessed "the greatest mind that has ever been directed to architecture." The Temple of Karnac as far excels the Parthenon in grandeur as the works of the mediæval architects do in beauty. And further, in all that is noblest in the Art, in thought, feeling, teaching, the heathen styles cannot, for a moment, stand beside the Christian. We would advise the student to make himself familiar with the classic orders, understand thoroughly their nature, both of theory and practice, and then have done with them.

"No arched building ever can attain the grandeur of the rectangular archless styles." Compare any Greek building with Amiens Cathedral, or Rheims, Beauvais, etc., and see if this be so.

The author winds up by declaring that the great constructive principle which we have to work out, is that of the truss or the "tensile

method," referring, we presume, to the use of iron. We trust that the revolution of common sense, which the Crystal Palace threatened to produce, is, by this time, crushed. At all events, for some thousands of years past, all good architecture has been executed in stone, brick, or wood, and we do devoutly believe that this will continue to be the case for as many years to come. On this point we profess "Oldfogyism."

On the whole, we cannot consider the book before us as adding anything of value to our stock of rudimentary works. A general textbook of architecture, fit to be put into hands of beginners, is yet to be written. If ever it is, we beg the printer to pay attention to the spelling, which, in *The Rudiments, etc.*, is shockingly "foul."

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"Nelly Bracken; a Tale of Forty Years Ago." By Annie Chambers Bradford. LIPPINCOTT, GRAMBO & CO.: 1855.

"NELLY BRACKEN" is a story of the western frontier, not a bloody narrative of savage massacres and carnage, but a bit of home romance. There are many fine points about the book, but the plot is too much involved to make it easy to read. The drawing of child-character is much better than that of the elders, and if we could entirely believe the preface, which makes apology for youth, we might think that the reason for it; but there are so many evidences in the book that the authoress "is no chicken," that we may, at least, determine not to affirm that she has not passed maturity. Nelly Bracken, the heroine, is a combination of the beautiful and child-like into a character of exceeding interest. She is thus described in an episodical reverie:—

"Was it a blessing or a curse to be thus keenly alive to the loveliness of creation, and for that very reason to be cut off from nearly all human companionship? Nelly loved Anthony-over and hop-scotch and hood-man-blind as well as any of her playmates. No one threw the ball over the old school-house roof with surer aim; no little foot could drive the quoit through the labyrinthine scotch with daintier skill; no ear catch more quickly than hers the half-resounded breath of the huddling or flying children in blind-man's-buff, or hold the captives with a tighter grasp. But when she would propose to them a ramble down the Silverthorn, or the recitation of some old historic legend, they would turn up their noses with an air of scorn, and say, she was trying to be like grown-up folks, or else was aping Miss Fay, an antiquated Englishwoman, who taught in the log school-house several years before, and was a bundle of nerves, and timidity, and poetic feeling. Then she would turn to Lu and Amy, but when they were not romping with the school-children, they were busy making flutes of pumpkin-leaf stalks, and screaming with laughter at the outlandish music they made, or building mud houses under the maple trees by the pond, or devising some headlong mischief in some other quarter; so a feeling of loveliness would come over her, which made her seem sullen; and then her mother would call her careless and wayward, and she would go off to the orchard—her refuge from all annoyances, and wonder if she were indeed her mother's child? She was so different from all the rest, they said; surely some poor unhappy woman, like Jock-abed, must have left her in the woods, and took care where Mrs. Bracken, perhaps, found her, and took care of her out of pity."

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"Harry's Vacation; or, Philosophy at Home." By William C. Richards, A.M. JAMES S. DICKERSON: 1855.

We like the way in which philosophy is run through the daily amusements of the vacation in this book. Children may gather much real knowledge, and be deluded into the belief that

they are not studying at all, but amusing themselves.

There is much *naïveté* in the ways of the children occasionally, though, for the most part, the dialogue goes on "like a book." We are inclined to believe that faults in children's books are more disastrous than in those which the wiser heads con, and that they should be at once the simplest and most profound of literary productions. The faults which the child absorbs, the man rarely loses.

It may be owing to our ignorance of philosophy that we were much amused by William's inhaling pure hydrogen gas, and deriving, therefrom, the benefit of nitrous oxide—is it so? The experiments are, however, generally well described, and of a valuable kind. The book is cleverly illustrated with woodcuts.

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"Romance of American Landscape." By T. Addison Richards, N. A. LEAVITT & ALLEN, New York.

MR. RICHARDS is well known to the public as a landscape painter, and a writer. In this work he has grouped together tales and traditions of American landscape, by the aid, in the way of machinery, of a party of artist friends who, gathered in such a social circle as only artists or German students can form, spin out their yarns of all sort of things seen and done, to make a book.

"Your book shall be finished as speedily as Aladdin's Castle," cried our guests. "We will have a literary 'bee'."

"You shall cut out the work, and we will play tailor to the muses."

"What is your theme? Not metaphysics—aye? (Metaphysics, we are sorry to say, are generally a bore to artists, who always prefer to *feel* truth, to being compelled to elaborate it by thought.—EWS. CRAYON.)

"Not sermons?"

"Not politics?"

"Not temperance?" chimed in one upon another, the associated face lengthening the while.

"By no means!" we hastened to explain; "neither philosophy, religion nor morals. Heaven forbid! We have a more genial topic—the Romance and Reality of American Landscape, its physique and morale, its historic tradition, its poetic legend, its incident, adventure, and suggestion. What say you to the text?"

"You could not have a happier one, and we learned in the book of Nature, are the very preachers to discourse thereon. Are not you, yourself, are we not all—painters and poets—life-long worshippers of Nature? Have we not laid our souls upon her sacred altar? Do we not ken her in all her thousand mystic utterances, and will she not lend us the living inspiration of her smile as we seek to chant her praise? Verily, a noble text, and now for the heads of the sermon."

"Our publishers," we explained, "are happily possessed of a portfolio of many of the most charming and famous bits of American scenery—a portfolio which they laudably desire to give to the world—and we are pledged to play master of ceremonies on the occasion, to expatiate upon the panorama as it passes."

The above extract will explain the points of the book. The scenes of the narrations are laid in every part of the Union. The illustrations are no great evidence of the enterprise of American publishers, being mainly old engravings—though some of them of considerable merit. The plates are in some cases much worn, and, on the whole, not worthy of the text. But as a half loaf is better than no bread, so poor impressions are better than none at all, for illustrative purposes, and this seems their function here.

We hope that at no distant time some one will take hold manfully of American scenery, and give us a thorough pictorial commentary on the spirit of American landscape. We fear, however, that the painter must arise who is capable of doing it alone.

The typography, and general getting up of the book, are excellent.